

Scythris potentillella (Lepidoptera: Scythrididae), a new species to the Belgian fauna

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Abstract. Two specimens of *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847) were caught at Lommel (Province of Limburg, Belgium) on 26 July 2008. This species was never recorded from Belgium before. It occurs throughout North-West, Central and East Europe. The larva lives on *Rumex acetosella* and *R. acetosa*.

Samenvatting. *Scythris potentillella* (Lepidoptera: Scythrididae), een nieuwe soort voor de Belgische fauna

Op 26 juli 2008 werden twee exemplaren *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847) verzameld te Lommel (Limburg, België). Dit is de eerste melding van deze soort voor de Belgische fauna. De soort is verspreid doorheen Noord-West-, Centraal- en Oost-Europa. De rups leeft op *Rumex acetosella* en *R. acetosa*.

Résumé. *Scythris potentillella* (Lepidoptera: Scythrididae), une espèce nouvelle pour la faune belge

Le 26 juillet 2008, deux exemplaires de *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847) furent capturés à Lommel (province du Limbourg, Belgique). Il s'agit de la première observation de cette espèce en Belgique. La répartition comprend le nord-est de l'Europe, l'Europe centrale et orientale. La chenille vit sur *Rumex acetosella* et *R. acetosa*.

Key words: *Scythris potentillella* – Belgium – Faunistics – First record.

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Introduction

On July 26, 2008 two males of *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847) were collected in a waste land habitat of the industrial area Balendijk at Lommel, province of Limburg. The moths were wiped out of the vegetation in late afternoon. The species is new for the fauna of Belgium.

The forewing of *S. potentillella* (Fig. 1) is blackish brown, occasionally without or with many, but mostly with some whitish scales in the fold, at the cell and at the apex of the wing. The moth can easily be confused with several other dark coloured *Scythris* species such as *S. disparella* (Tengström, [1848]), *S. picaepennis* (Haworth, 1828), *S. ericotella* (Heinemann & Snellen, 1878), *S. fuscoaenea* (Haworth, 1828), *S. laminella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775), and *S. inspersella* (Hübner, [1817]). All these species belong to the Belgian fauna (De Prins & Steeman 2003–2009). For a safe identification the examination of the genitalia is necessary.

The shape of the valvae and sternum 8 in the male genitalia (Fig. 2) and of the sterigma and apophyses in the female are typical for the species. Bengtsson (1997) gives a detailed description of the genitalia.

Distribution

S. potentillella has a West-Palaearctic distribution and is known from Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden (Karsholt & Razowski 1996). The species has also been recorded from Portugal, Italy and Turkey (Bengtsson 1997), but Bengtsson (2007) does not mention Italy and Portugal. The data from Armenia are questionable (Bengtsson 1997).

In the Netherlands *S. potentillella* occurs in the dunes, in the south-east of the province of Noord-Brabant and in the province of Limburg. The closest known locality to Lommel in the Netherlands is at the nature reserve "Plateaux", Valkenswaard, province of Noord-Brabant, at a distance of about 20 km. One male was collected there by the author in 1998 at a warm, dry sandy place with a flowery vegetation, surrounded by wood. The Belgian locality is in the same region as the south-east Dutch localities and completes the West Palaearctic distribution of the species at country level.

Biology

Little is known about the biology of this species. It lives in dry, sandy, open, places. The larva is known to live in a web tube on the hostplant, sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella* L.), near the soil. Sometimes, under favourable conditions, numerous adults can be observed at one locality (Bengtsson 1997).

Kuchlein (1993) records common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa* L.) and sheep's sorrel as the larval foodplants.

In Belgium the two males were collected in a dry and sandy biotope with a flowery vegetation among which the foodplant of the larva, *R. acetosa*, is growing.

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Fig. 1. *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847). Belgium, Province of Limburg, Lommel, 26.vii.2008, leg. F. Groenen. Scale bar 2 mm. (Photo: Jurate De Prins).



Fig. 2. *Scythris potentillella* (Zeller, 1847), male genitalia. Belgium, Province of Limburg, Lommel, 26.vii.2008, leg. F. Groenen, gen. prep. FG 1647. Scale bar 100 µm. (Photo: Jurate De Prins).